

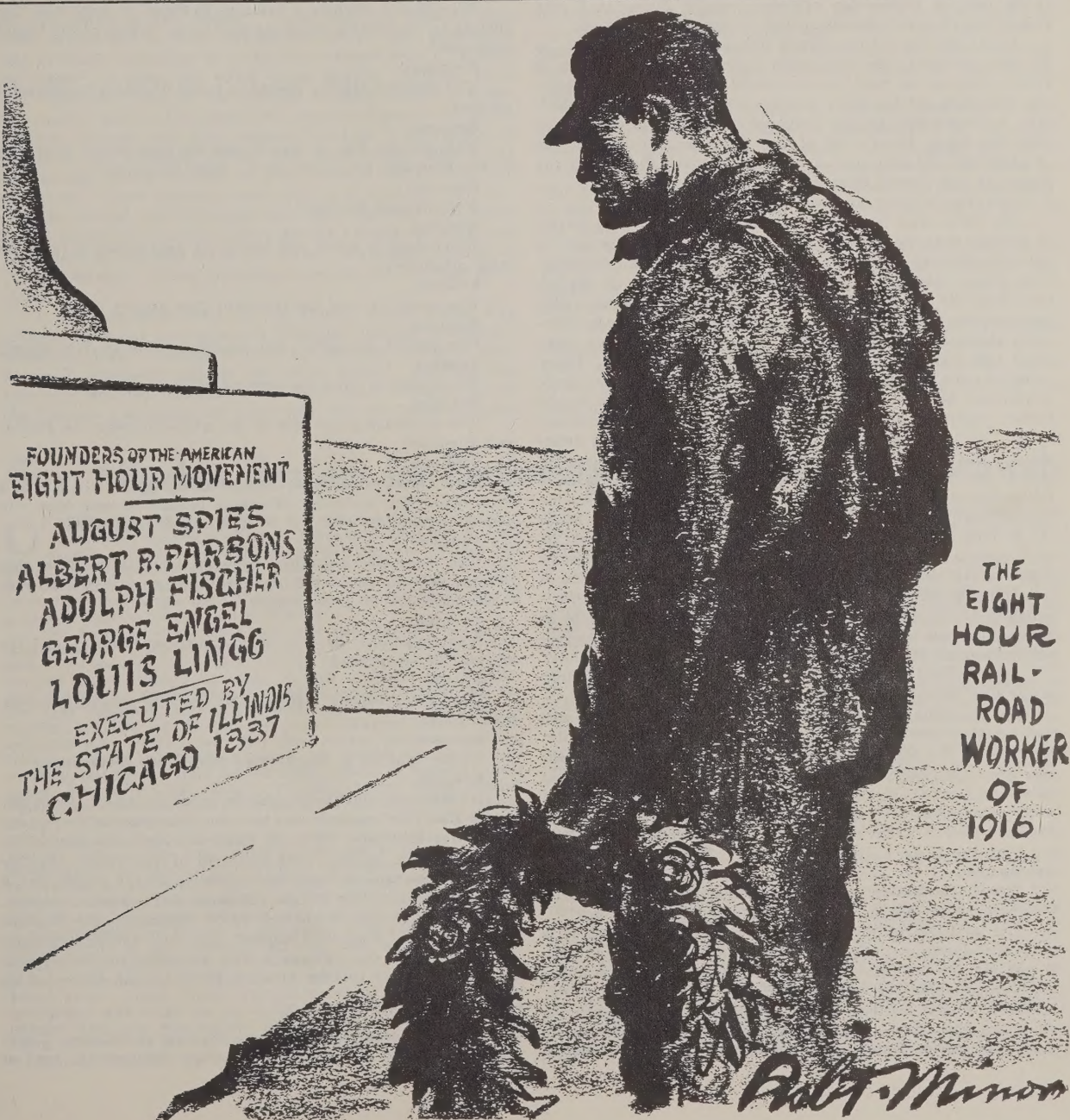
THE BLAST

LYDIA GIBSON

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Greater Love Hath No Man Than This, That a Man Lay Down His Life for His Friends

The Billings Trial

THE TRIAL of Warren K. Billings is now on. The case is progressing more quickly than is usual in trials of this character. Five days proved sufficient to select a jury and to submit almost all of the evidence of the prosecution. The defense, it is understood, will also require but little time to present its side. It is very likely that a verdict will be reached within another week.

Seldom has a trial of such grave character consumed so little time. Murder cases usually drag out for months and months. The trial of Mathew Schmidt, for instance, lasted over three months. David Caplan's trial almost as long. But the reason for the celerity with which the present case is carried on is simple. Rarely has an accusation of this character been so preposterous, rarely has the prosecution evidence been so flimsy as in the case of the United Railroads against Billings, Mooney et al.

I say "the case of the United Railroads" advisedly. For as the trial unfolds in the court room, from day to day, it becomes evident even to the most narrow-minded partisan of the prosecution that it is not the State that is prosecuting Warren K. Billings, as responsible for the Preparedness Parade explosion, nor even the Police Department of San Francisco, but clearly and unmistakably the real prosecutor is the United Railroads, in the person of one Martin Swanson.

And who is this man Swanson?

The daily press has assiduously sought to throw the mantle of mystery over the elusive Swanson. But in reality there is no mystery whatever about him. Swanson is just a plain detective. Very plain. Though a former Pinkerton, he is not of the old type plug-ugly whose very name has become synonymous with irresponsible brutality. Nor yet is Swanson the modern dime-novel sleuth that so delights the hearts of our incipient presidents. No, Swanson is just a common every-day detective. Every detective tries to be an actor off the boards. If he leans to heavy melodrama, he becomes a Pinkerton man; if he inclines to the lighter vaudeville, he joins the Burns staff; if his tendencies are in the line of realism, his ideal is Sherlock Holmes. But Swanson is a bad actor—which is here not meant figuratively but literally. His manner too obviously betrays a conscious, even a self-conscious, imitation of Conan Doyle's super-sleuth. Among that element of the local underworld whose intelligence is below the average, Swanson is considered "clever." I have no doubt he is, by comparison. Nor am I prepared to contradict a friend's statement to the effect that Swanson is "the most intelligent man in the District Attorney's office." It is probably quite true—which is not so much a testimonial to Swanson's intelligence as proof of the lack of it on the part of those that elected and chose the incumbents of the District Attorney's office.

This pen picture of Swanson can be completed by the story of my first meeting with him.

The door bell of THE BLAST office rang, and the editor—who was just then also filling the no less important position of janitor—answered the call. A stockily built man, above average size, his rather heavy face lightened by a pair of not unpleasant blue eyes, entered. I did not expect any visitors, and this man was a total stranger. I glanced at his face, then at his feet, suspiciously large. "What can I do for you?" I asked; "I see you are from the District Attorney's office." The man scowled. It was Swanson.

This "identification" of Swanson is necessary to understand the character of, and the proceedings at, the trial of Billings.

The evidence of the prosecution is now all in, and it is clear that it has entirely failed to establish its case. In fact, it has no case at all. The identification of Billings was the most preposterous ever attempted in a criminal court. A few hysterical women had him dressed in half a dozen different suits, all at the same time. No connection whatever has been shown, much less proven, between the accused and the bomb explosion.

It has not even been established whether it was dynamite or nitroglycerine, a bomb or infernal machine, or some other fatal contrivance that caused the deaths on Steuart Street. Indeed, the prosecution failed to prove anything except that an explosion took place on July 22d. And even regarding the circumstances and character of that explosion the District Attorney's witnesses were so hopelessly mixed that an out-of-town visitor in the courtroom might have been led to doubt the very fact of the explosion.

The essential features of the Billings trial may be summarized as follows:

Who shadowed Billings for weeks previous to the bomb explosion?

Swanson.

Who offered Billings a bribe of \$5,000.00 to implicate Tom Mooney in the blowing up of the high-power towers of the United Railroads?

Swanson.

Who offered a similar reward to Israel Weinberg for the same purpose?

Swanson.

Who was the first to suggest that the most active labor men of San Francisco be accused of the bomb explosion?

Swanson.

Who arrested Billings?

Swanson.

Who helped to arrest and search the apartments of the other labor prisoners?

Swanson.

Who helped to raid the offices of THE BLAST?

Swanson.

Who grilled the editor and associate editor of THE BLAST?

Swanson.

Who helped to sweat the arrested labor men?

Swanson.

Who is always at the side of the official prosecutors, Fickert and Brennan?

Swanson.

Who threatened Israel Weinberg to "fix him", when—a week before the explosion—Weinberg refused to bear false witness in connection with the U. R. R. tower explosions?

Swanson.

Who made the statement, before the trial, to the effect that Billings is to be railroaded, and that after that it will be easy to convict all the other defendants?

Swanson.

Who stated that he will "get" Alexander Berkman and the rest of THE BLAST staff?

Swanson.

Who is the leading spirit in the specially created Detective Bomb Bureau?

Swanson.

Whose hand is so plainly seen behind the prosecution?

Swanson.

It's Swanson all through, the private detective of the Pacific Gas & Electric Company, who has also done yeoman service for the United Railroads. It is all Swanson, who, according to his own admission, is the "head detective of the Public Utilities Protective Bureau, an organization formed by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company, The Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company, the Sierra and San Francisco Power Company, the Western States Gas and Electric Company, and the Northern Electric Railroad." The same Swanson who, according to the eleventh hour admission of District Attorney Fickert, is an officer of his staff.

* * * * *
Two main features characterize the trial of Billings. I have already described the first: the dominant business interests of

San Francisco directing the prosecution of Billings et al. through their private detective whose mouthpiece is the office of the District Attorney.

The second feature is even more significant. The keynote of the prosecution all through the trial has been, in the words of Assistant District Attorney Brennan: "This case is similar to the 'Spies Case'"—meaning the case of the Chicago Anarchists. We have a precedent, Brennan argued over and over again, in the conviction and hanging of the Chicago Anarchists for a "general conspiracy."

Intoxicated by his imagination run amuck, Brennan invoked the ghost of the "Haymarket Riot" to witness the parallel of the case of Billings with that of the Chicago men. He examined every salesman regarding his affiliations with Anarchists and Anarchism. "Have you been at any time, or are you now, connected with any organization of Anarchy?" "Have you ever been, or are you now, a subscriber for, or a reader of, the publication known as THE BLAST?" These were the insistent questions propounded to every prospective juror. The prosecution was evidently preparing to charge the accused with a "general conspiracy" to upset the whole social system. Billings, Brennan vociferated, was "in the business of going around dynamiting people," and he had repeatedly "terrorized property" (sic!). In 1913, Billings and Tom Mooney "entered a conspiracy to dynamite and terrorize persons and corporations entertaining notions and beliefs contrary to their ideas of social order and conditions." Here Brennan—who looks as if he might have successfully sat for that celebrated painting, "The Bull in a China Shop"—threw out his chest, justly feeling himself the legitimate descendant of the long mute and forever inglorious Grinnell of Chicago infamy. (State prosecutor against the Chicago Anarchists.)

It was too much even for the Court. Judge Dunne very properly ruled out the vague and indefinite "general conspiracy," remarking dryly: "Surely you are not seriously trying to prove a general conspiracy against the whole world." But this was just what Brennan was aiming at. That was the charge against the Chicago Anarchists, he contended, and the Court informed

him that the Chicago labor men were "convicted and hanged for conspiring against the police."

That old parrot-cry of "Anarchist conspiracy" again! Almost thirty years have passed since the executions of 1887. The great Chicago trial has become a matter of history. Scores of books and innumerable magazine articles and essays have been written on the subject. We radicals thought ourselves justified in assuming that intelligent men of the present generation are familiar with the real facts of that great tragedy—the greatest tragedy in the annals of American labor. At the very least it could be expected that members of the legal profession should be cognizant of the long since established fact that the gallows of 1887 witnessed the blackest and most heinous judicial crime ever committed in an allegedly civilized and Christian country. Every school boy should know by this time that the Chicago Anarchists were *murdered*, cold-bloodedly murdered, by the mob in broadcloth and velvet, the Citizens' Alliance and their hirelings of the press and police, after they had bitterly prejudiced and ferociously inflamed the public mind. They were strangled to death for their love of liberty and devotion to the oppressed, and their foul murder has been crying to Heaven for now over a quarter of a century.

It was appalling to witness the crassest ignorance of this greatest criminal case of America masquerading in the court room in the guise of legal precedent. Neither judge nor prosecution seemed to have the least conception of the real facts of that historic case. And I have since realized that their ignorance in this matter reflects a similar condition of mind on the part of the public.

No decent man or woman can lay claim to intelligence if he persist in remaining ignorant of the most tragic event in the history of America—the terrible tragedy that cost the lives of seven of the noblest and best of mankind.

The following extract from the official review of the Chicago Anarchists' case (in 1893) by J. P. Altgeld, then Governor of the State of Illinois, will convince the impartial reader that never in all human ken was there a more infamous travesty on justice.

Gov. Altgeld's Reasons for Pardoning Fielden, Neebe and Schwab

ON THE night of May 4, 1886, a public meeting was held on Haymarket Square in Chicago; there were from 800 to 1,000 people present, nearly all being laboring men. There had been trouble, growing out of the effort to introduce an eight-hour day, resulting in some collisions with the police, in one of which several laboring people were killed, and this meeting was called as a protest against alleged police brutality.

The meeting was orderly and was attended by the mayor, who remained until the crowd began to disperse, and then went away. As soon as Capt. John Bonfield, of the police department, learned that the mayor had gone, he took a detachment of police and hurried to the meeting for the purpose of dispersing the few that remained, and as the police approached the place of meeting a bomb was thrown by some unknown person, which exploded and wounded many and killed several policemen, among the latter being one Mathias Degan. A number of people were arrested, and after a time August Spies, Albert R. Parsons, Louis Lingg, Michael Schwab, Samuel Fielden, George Engel, Adolph Fischer and Oscar Neebe were indicted for the murder of Mathias Degan. The prosecution could not discover who had thrown the bomb and could not bring the really guilty man to justice, and, as some of the men indicted were not at the Haymarket meeting and had nothing to do with it, the prosecution was forced to proceed on the theory that the men indicted were guilty of murder because it was claimed they had at various times in the past uttered and printed incendiary and seditious language, practically advising the killing of policemen, of Pinkerton men and others acting in the capacity, and that they were therefore responsible for the murder of Mathias Degan. The public was greatly excited, and after a prolonged trial all the defendants were found guilty; Oscar Neebe was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment and all of the other defendants were sentenced to be hanged. The case was carried to the Supreme Court and was there affirmed in the fall of 1887. Soon thereafter Lingg committed suicide. The sentence of Fielden and Schwab was com-

muted to imprisonment for life, and Parsons, Fischer, Engel and Spies were hanged, and the petitioners now ask to have Neebe, Fielden and Schwab set at liberty. * * *

The record of the trial shows that the jury in this case was not drawn in the manner that juries usually are drawn; that is, instead of having a number of names drawn out of a box that contained many hundred names, as the law contemplates shall be done in order to insure a fair jury and give neither side the advantage, the trial judge appointed one Henry L. Ryce as a special bailiff to go out and summon such men as he (Ryce) might select to act as jurors. While this practice has been sustained in cases in which it did not appear that either side had been prejudiced thereby, it is always a dangerous practice, for it gives the bailiff absolute power to select a jury that will be favorable to one side or the other. * * * The twelve jurors whom the defendants were finally forced to accept, after the challenges were exhausted, were of the same general character as the others, and a number of them stated candidly that they were so prejudiced that they could not try the case fairly, but each, when examined by the court, was finally induced to say that he believed he could try the case fairly upon the evidence that was produced in court alone. * * *

Upon the whole, therefore, considering the facts brought to light since the trial, as well as the record of the trial and the answers of the jurors as given therein, it is clearly shown that Ryce was appointed special bailiff at the suggestion of the State's attorney, and that he did summon a prejudiced jury which he believed would hang the defendants; and further, that the fact that Ryce was summoning only that kind of men was brought to the attention of the court before the panel was full, and it was asked to stop it, but refused to pay any attention to the matter, but permitted Ryce to go on, and then forced the defendants to go to trial before this jury.

While no collusion is proven between the judge and the State's attorney, it is clearly shown that after the verdict and

while a motion for a new trial was pending, a charge was filed in court that Ryce had packed the jury, and that the attorney for the State got Mr. Favor to refuse to make an affidavit bearing on this point, which the defendants could use, and then the court refused to take any notice of it unless the affidavit was obtained, although it was informed that Mr. Favor would not make an affidavit, but stood ready to come into court and make a full statement if the court desired him to do so.

These facts alone would call for executive interference, especially as Mr. Favor's affidavit was not before the Supreme Court at the time it considered the case. * * *

No matter what the defendants were charged with, they were entitled to a fair trial, and no greater danger could possibly threaten our institutions than to have the courts of justice run wild or give way to popular clamor; and when the trial judge in this case ruled that a relative of one of the men who was killed was a competent juror, and this after the man had candidly stated that he was deeply prejudiced, and that his relationship caused him to feel more strongly than he otherwise might; and when, in scores of instances, he ruled that men who candidly declared that they believed the defendants to be guilty, that this was a deep conviction and would influence their verdict, and that it would require strong evidence to convince them that the defendants were innocent; when in all these instances the trial judge ruled that these men were competent jurors, simply because they had, under adroit manipulation, been led to say that they believed they could try the case fairly on the evidence, then the proceedings lost all semblance of a fair trial.

The State has never discovered who it was that threw the bomb which killed the policemen, and the evidence does not show any connection whatever between the defendants and the man who did throw it. The trial judge, in overruling the motion for a new hearing, and again, recently in a magazine article, used this language:

"The conviction has not gone on the ground that they did have actually any personal participation in the particular act which caused the death of Degan, but the conviction proceeds upon the ground that they had generally, by speech and print, advised large classes of the people, not particular individuals, but large classes, to commit murder, and had left the commission, the time and place and when, to the individual will and whim and caprice, or whatever it may be, of each individual man who listened to their advice, and that in consequence of that advice, in pursuance of that advice, and influenced by that advice, somebody not known did throw the bomb that caused Degan's death. Now, if this is not a correct principle of the law, then the defendants of course are entitled to a new trial. This case is without a precedent; there is no example in the law books of a case of this sort."

The judge certainly told the truth when he stated that this case was without a precedent, and that no example could be found in the law books to sustain the law as above laid down. For, in all the centuries during which government has been maintained among men, and crime has been punished, no judge in a civilized country has ever laid down such a rule before. The petitioners claim that it was laid down in this case simply because the prosecution, not having discovered the real criminal, would otherwise not have been able to convict anybody; that this course was then taken to appease the fury of the public, and that the judgment was allowed to stand for the same reason. I will not discuss this. But taking the law as above laid down, it was necessary under it to prove, and that beyond a reasonable doubt, that the person committing the violent deed had at least heard or read the advice given to the masses, for until he either heard or read it he did not receive it, and if he did not receive it, he did not commit the violent act in pursuance of that advice; and it is here that the case for the State fails; with all his apparent eagerness to force conviction in court, and his efforts in defending his course since the trial, the judge, speaking on this point in his magazine article, makes this statement: "It is probably true that Rudolph Schnaubelt threw the bomb," which statement is merely a surmise and is all that is known about it, and is certainly not sufficient to convict eight men on. In fact, until the State proves from whose hands the bomb came, it is impossible to show any connection between the man who threw it and these defendants. * * *

Again, it is shown here that the bomb was, in all probability, thrown by some one seeking personal revenge; that a course had been pursued by the authorities which would naturally cause this; that for a number of years prior to the Haymarket affair there had been labor troubles, and in several cases a number of laboring people, guilty of no offense, had been shot down in cold blood by Pinkerton men, and none of the murderers were brought to justice. The evidence taken at coroners' inquests and presented here, shows that in at least two cases men were fired

on and killed when they were running away, and there was consequently no occasion to shoot, yet nobody was punished; that in Chicago there had been a number of strikes in which some of the police not only took sides against the men, but without any authority of law invaded and broke up peaceable meetings, and in scores of cases brutally clubbed people who were guilty of no offense whatever. * * *

It is shown that various attempts were made to bring to justice the men who wore the uniform of the law while violating it, but all to no avail; that the laboring people found the prisons always open to receive them, but the courts of justice were practically closed to them; that the prosecuting officers vied with each other in hunting them down, but were deaf to their appeals; that in the spring of 1886 there were more labor disturbances in the city, and particularly at the McCormick factory; that under the leadership of Capt. Bonfield the brutalities of the previous year were even exceeded. Some affidavits and other evidence are offered on this point, which I cannot give for want of space. It appears that this was the year of the eight-hour agitation, and efforts were made to secure an eight-hour day about May 1st, and that a number of laboring men standing, not on the street, but on a vacant lot, were quietly discussing the situation in regard to the movement, when suddenly a large body of police, under orders from Bonfield, charged on them and began to club them; that some of the men, angered at the unprovoked assault, at first resisted, but were soon dispersed; that some of the police fired on the men while they were running and wounded a large number who were already 100 feet or more away and were running as fast as they could; that at least four of the number so shot down died; that this was wanton and unprovoked murder, but there was not even so much as an investigation.

While some men may tamely submit to being clubbed and seeing their brothers shot down, there are some who will resent it, and will nurture a spirit of hatred and seek revenge for themselves, and the occurrences that preceded the Haymarket tragedy indicate that the bomb was thrown by some one who, instead of acting on the advice of anybody, was simply seeking personal revenge for having been clubbed, and that Capt. Bonfield is the man who is really responsible for the death of the police officers.

It is also shown that the character of the Haymarket meeting sustains this view. The evidence shows there were only 800 or 1,000 people present, and that it was a peaceable and orderly meeting; that the mayor of the city was present and saw nothing out of the way, and that he remained until the crowd began to disperse, the meeting being practically over, and the crowd engaged in dispersing when he left; that had the police remained away for twenty minutes more there would have been nobody left there, but as soon as Bonfield had learned that the mayor had left, he could not resist the temptation to have some more people clubbed, and went up with a detachment of police to disperse the meeting; and that on the appearance of the police the bomb was thrown by some unknown person, and several innocent and faithful officers, who were simply obeying an uncalld-for order of their superior, were killed. All of these facts tend to show the improbability of the theory of the prosecution that the bomb was thrown as a result of a conspiracy on the part of the defendants to commit murder; if the theory of the prosecution were correct, there would have been many more bombs thrown; and the fact that only one was thrown shows that it was an act of personal revenge.

It is further shown here that much of the evidence given at the trial was a pure fabrication; that some of the prominent police officials, in their zeal, not only terrorized ignorant men by throwing them into prison and threatening them with torture if they refused to swear to anything desired, but that they offered money and employment to those who would consent to do this. Further, that they deliberately planned to have fictitious conspiracies formed in order that they might get the glory of discovering them. * * *

I will simply say in conclusion, on this branch of the case, that the facts tend to show that the bomb was thrown as an act of personal revenge, and that the prosecution has never discovered who threw it, and the evidence utterly fails to show that the man who did throw it ever heard or read a word coming from the defendants; consequently it fails to show that he acted on any advice given by them. And if he did not act on or hear any advice coming from the defendants, either in speeches or through the press, then there was no case against them, even under the law as laid down by Judge Gary. * * *

The appeal of the petitioners is therefore granted and the unconditional release of Neebe, Fielden and Schwab hereby ordered.

JOHN P. ALTGELD.

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Reflections

THE BIG mass meeting in Dreamland Rink, on the eve of the trial of Warren K. Billings, was a significant and timely expression of the attitude of the workers of San Francisco in the cases of the labor men accused of the "dynamite conspiracy." No intelligent man in that vast audience could fail to realize that there is indeed a sinister conspiracy under way. But the labor defendants are not of the conspirators. These latter are to be sought in other quarters. The mask was torn from the face of the prosecution and the ugly cabala exposed to public gaze when Bob Minor, in a voice solemn and impressive, declared:

"I want Mr. Fickert's servants here tonight to repeat this to him: a man can be murdered as easily and more safely with a legal rope than with a bomb. And, Mr. Fickert, whether it be dishonesty or whether it be stupidity, try to understand that these men are not to be and cannot be lynched."

1886 and 1916! It was in 1886 that seven men were condemned to death for having initiated the eight-hour movement. The Citizens' Association of Chicago, composed of Board of Trade men, bankers and other open shop advocates, had raised a big fund to kill the demand for the shorter day and stifle the voices of its chief spokesmen, the Chicago Anarchists. They contributed \$100,000 to reward the jurors that sent our comrades to the gallows.

Now, thirty years later, an attempt is made to repeat the heinous performance. In the year of the Lord 1916, the Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco has raised a million-dollar fund to exterminate organized labor and turn San Francisco into an open shop city. Now again a conspiracy is being hatched to crucify the most active labor elements.

But in vain! 1886 is past, and with it have gone the conditions that permitted our noble comrades to be sacrificed on the altar of greed and corruption. As Bob Minor so well said, in 1916 the labor prisoners "are not to be and cannot be lynched." The country, the workers, have made some progress since the perpetration of that blackest crime in the annals of American history, the judicial murders of 1887.

FOUR days before the great eight-hour strike of 1886, and only one week before the Haymarket tragedy, the New York Times, organ of the railroads and banks, said editorially:

"The strike question is, of course, the dominant one, and is disagreeable in a variety of ways. A short and easy way to settle it is urged in some quarters, which is to indict for conspiracy every man who strikes, and summarily lock him up. This method would undoubtedly strike a wholesome terror into the hearts of the working classes. Another way suggested is to pick up the leaders and make such an example of them as would scare others into submission."—N. Y. Times, April 25, 1886.

Other expressions were:

"The best policy would be to drive workingmen into open mutiny against the law."—N. Y. Tribune, April 25, 1886.

"Give them the rifle diet and see how they like that kind of bread."—Tom Scott, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

"The simplest plan probably, when one is not a member of the Humane Society, is to put arsenic in the supplies of food furnished the unemployed."—Chicago Tribune.

Thus the press in the days of the Haymarket. Would any newspaper today dare express such sentiments? I doubt it.

We have advanced. The Chicago Anarchists were hanged because they were Anarchists. They were not charged with the throwing of the Haymarket bomb, nor even with any knowledge concerning it. They were condemned because they were social heretics, and because they served labor faithfully and initiated the eight-hour movement.

Today, in 1916, thanks to the efforts of the martyred Chicago Anarchists and other friends of labor—today the President of the United States begs the workers to accept the eight-hour day.

The world do move.

SELDOME have the workers been so openly and brazenly tricked as were the New York car men in the settlement of their strike of a few weeks ago. Taken by surprise and being unprepared, the Interborough agreed to recognize the union, and the men returned to work on the solemn promise that their other grievances would be discussed by a conference of the representatives of the Company with those of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electrical Railway Employees. Should these be unable to come to a settlement, the matter was to be submitted to arbitration.

But no sooner did the men return to work than the Company began to eliminate the active union men. It organized a "union" of its own, forced its men to sign individual contracts not to strike for three years, and then refused to deal with the Amalgamated.

When these developments became public, even some of the most conservative papers of New York branded the proceedings as perfidious. A general strike of all rapid transit workers of New York is now on, and it is to be hoped that the Amalgamated will profit by the example of the Railroad Brotherhoods. It is not to the point, in this connection, what the new Congressional eight-hour law may or may not do for the men. Its significance lies in the demonstrated power of solidaric labor to force an issue and to bring the industrial magnates, as well as the government, to their knees.

* * *

OF COURSE, no one doubts the sincerity of the Chamber of Commerce in its widely advertised stand for "law and order."

We have been informed on reliable authority that Koster and his gentlemen of Commerce also "have a heart" and that their hearts are bleeding for the widows and orphans of the bomb tragedy. We do not doubt it. Have they not asked the public to raise thousands of dollars for the bereaved families? They have even made personal contributions.

Only one family seems to have escaped the humanitarian notice of Koster & Co. No tears were shed by the Commercial Chamber for the widow of Olson and her five orphans so cruelly robbed of husband, father and supporter. No fund has been raised, and not a penny contributed by Koster & Co. for this bereaved family. Is it possible they were overlooked in the general scramble to get press notices for the Chamber of Commerce?

We feel confident that it is only necessary to call the attention of the gentlemen of the Chamber to this sad case, to secure their immediate interest and support. For surely no one will be so mean as to believe that Widow Olson and her fatherless children were so pitilessly neglected by Mr. Koster only because Olson, the longshoreman, happened to be killed by Homer Waters, the negro ex-convict employed by Koster's Law and Order Committee as a gunman during the recent Longshoremen's strike.

Waters shot and killed Olson in cold blood. Surely the Law and Order Committee would thoroughly investigate the matter, if they were informed about the case. Surely they would take drastic measures to have the unprovoked murder punished!

Yes, they already have. One of the ablest and most expensive criminal lawyers of San Francisco, R. Porter Ashe, was retained by the Law and Order Committee to prosecute the murderer, as they prosecute the culinary pickets, for instance? Oh, no. The Chamber hired Ashe to defend the murderous gunman. The least experienced assistant of the District Attorney's office was selected to prosecute the case and—strange to say—Waters, though convicted by the jury, is to be turned loose on probation. While in jail he was receiving a weekly check of \$12.00.

The moral of the story is: The murderer of strikers earns the support of the Chamber of Commerce.

* * *

I WAS not in the city at the time, but I understand that Thornwell Mullaly, grand marshal of the Preparedness Parade, had been involved in the graft prosecutions against Calhoun, of the U. R. R., and that his name was connected with the mysterious blowing up of the home of one of the witnesses against the grafters.

A friend, noticing Mullaly in the District Attorney's office, asked me the other day: "Is Mullaly in the case as a suspect or as an expert on explosives?"

* * *

IF THERE ever was a time in this country when the people really believed in a free press and the freedom of assembly, it must have been in the dim and hoary past. Today only a few "cranks," and that mostly "foreigners," take any stock in Thomas Jefferson's, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

An orderly meeting is broken up by the police in San Francisco and nine of the participants arrested, but the occurrence hardly attracts the notice of the "good citizen." He is absorbed in swallowing the political clap-trap dished out to him by his bosses,

never for a moment suspecting that the suppression of free assembly is a greater blow at his well-being than the loss of even the biggest strike. For the strangling of free expression is the most sinister step toward political and economic despotism.

As in San Francisco, so everywhere throughout this glorious land of liberty. In Boston, Van K. Allison is sentenced to three years' jail for giving a visitor at his office scientific information on birth control. In New York Ida Rauh, Bolton Hall and Jessie Ashley are under indictment for distributing necessary knowledge on the vital sex problem, though Mr. Hall had no part in the distribution, merely acting as chairman of the meeting where the "terrible crime" was committed.

Talk about liberty, when any stupid of a judge may give an order, at will, to raid any one's home or office and confiscate any book, pamphlet or picture that some filthy-minded Comstock or other pathologically sexed member of the Mudfog Association for Clothing the Naked Truth may consider "immoral." Thus a certain Sumner, undoubtedly a psychopathic degenerate and pupil of Comstock, raids the office of the *Masses*, confiscating every volume of "The Sexual Question," by Forel. Professor Forel, whose work is scientific and conservative, "immoral"!

From the suppression of the revolutionary press to the confiscation of works of art and science is but a step. Having submitted the one, we have exposed ourselves to the other. It is time to call a halt.

THE LOCAL newspapers failed to take note of an interesting incident at the Dreamland Rink mass meeting. Mr. Wm. A. Spooner, Secretary of the Labor Council of Alameda County, was the first speaker. He had talked but a few minutes when he remarked: "Ladies and gentlemen, I realize that there are several detectives distributed through the audience—"

Mr. Spooner did not get time to finish the sentence. There was a sudden commotion in the front rows of the audience: some one had taken a fit! Great excitement prevailed. People began to shout, some rushed to the front, and a panic seemed imminent.

But Mr. Spooner was equal to the occasion. "If it is an honest fit," he remarked, "I wish him good luck."

The audience "got" it. There was a roar that shook the rafters, and the threatened panic was over.

The detectives left in disgust.

Remember the Iron Range Strikers!

Fellow Workers and Friends!

Let us be brief and concise:

15,000 workers have been on strike on the Mesaba Range since the beginning of June.

100,000 men, women and children cut off from their regular livelihood.

Civil Government is suspended in Northeastern Minnesota. Steel Trust rule by gunmen about 1500 strong. Police, Courts, Press, Pulpit and Political machinery at the command of the Steel Trust. Hundreds of miners, wives of miners, their daughters and children jailed.

Four strikers, one striker's wife with a nursing babe, accused of first degree murder to cover up crimes of gunmen.

Five labor organizers held as participators in the murder under charge carrying life imprisonment.

Eight hundred families voluntarily starving themselves awaiting your action!

That is briefly the situation on the Mesaba Range in Minnesota.

Fellow workers, who like ourselves are on the outside of this terror-stricken district, the Minnesota Miners are putting it up to us.

They have tackled the greatest enemy of labor in this country, they have staked their all, they have staked their breadless and homeless women and children.

The jails of the Range are right now resounding with the songs of freedom, sung by strikers, strikers' wives and strikers' children who have no other refuge.

It seems they are determined to conquer or die.

By their own power they cannot conquer. They are looking up to us with the confidence of children to their protectors, as men will do in the hour of need. They have nothing left but their undaunted spirit, which bids them to hold out and save this Verdun of the class war in America.

If we do not hasten to their aid they will perish, and we shall by our own negligence have destroyed this outpost of labor which occupies the most difficult ground on the whole industrial battlefield.

If we leave them in the lurch they shall go back to work some day perhaps, broken in spirit, and with hope extinguished in their hearts. They shall probably thereafter keep their peace, knowing they are standing alone in the world and have no help to expect.

If we help them to victory we shall have shot to pieces the fortress of oppression thrown up by the arrogant Steel Trust against Labor.

If we help them to win we shall at the same time liberate the ten fellow workers in the shadow of a living death.

Are we going to let these ten men and women be destroyed for being true to us, true to our common cause? NO!

We, the Committee of Defense, claim to know the workers of this country enough to have the right to call out to those men and women:

"Hold out a little while longer. Do not give in. It takes time for us to act but we are coming to your aid. Hold out a while longer."

Are you going to back us up? Yes, we know you are.

The miners of Minnesota need your financial aid and your moral aid. They need money to keep the destitute alive and hopeful, they need your peremptory command to their oppressors to desist on penalty of your tying up the industries of the whole country.

"Invest" the spare cash you have as an organization and as individuals in supporting them. We know it is not much, but if we all help out at once our mites will swell into a mighty flood that will accomplish wonders. This appeal is being sent to every labor organization in this country.

Let us surprise these unknown brave men and women by showing them that they have devout friends in every village of this country. Raise money by the usual methods if you have none on hand. As for moral aid, the Defense Committee implores you to send resolutions expressing your sentiments and your wishes to the Governor of the State of Minnesota, at St. Paul, Minn., and to the Sheriff of St. Louis Co., Duluth, Minn.

ACT, but act quickly! Call a special meeting if necessary and arrange mass-meetings to protest.

An injury to one is an injury to all. One for all and all for one.

It is your own fate you are deciding, it is your own destiny you are shaping when you help your brothers and fellow-workers now striking on the Mesaba Range.

Fraternally yours,

IVA SHUSTER,

Secretary.

Please send all money to JOHN SEPPANEN, treasurer of the strike committee, Box 372, Virginia, Minn., or to Pietro Allegro, the treasurer of the Defense Committee, 226 Lafayette Street, New York, N. Y., or through any other channel, just so you are sure the money gets to the strikers.

A Last Call to Radicals

THE INTERNATIONAL Workers' Defense League of Los Angeles is nearing the end of its work against the efforts of the capitalist class to suppress free speech and free press.

October 1st the appeal of the Magon brothers will be reviewed by the court. The decision of that court will determine the future of the radical press of this country—your press. A flimsy excuse will be all that is necessary to still its voice.

The persons of the Magon brothers do not interest the League or its members. Composed of all shades of radical belief, a large portion of the League members are at variance with the Magons and their propaganda, but these members realize that something greater than the Magons or their propaganda is at stake and have gone into the fight heart and soul.

The League was formed for defense and not for propaganda work, so that today it may be defending an Anarchist, tomorrow a Socialist and the day after an Industrialist. Your turn may come next.

What have you done in the fight? What can you do?

Listen! Five hundred dollars must be raised by October 1st to win the Magon brothers' appeal. Defeat means death to the radical press.

Get your local paper to publish this call and start a subscription list in their paper.

Go to your local and read this to the members.

If you do not belong to a local go to every radical or semi-radical meeting you can reach and ask for five hundred dollars. You may not get it all in one place, but get all you can. Get up a social, dance or mass meeting.

Secure a list of radical names or others whom you think will give money, mail the names to this office and we will mail them copies of the appeal.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DEFENSE LEAGUE
231 Douglas Building, Los Angeles, California.

The Open Shop

“WHAT is all this talk in the papers about the open shop?” asked Mr. Hennessey.

“Why, don’t ye know?” said Mr. Dooley. “Really, I’m surprised at yer ignorance, Hinnissey. What is th’ open shop? Sure, ’tis a shop where they kape th’ dore open t’ accommodate th’ consthant sthream of min comin’ in t’ take jobs cheaper thin th’ min whut ’as th’ jobs. ’Tis like this, Hinnissey—suppose wan of these freebarn Amerycan citizens is wurkin’ in an open shop for th’ princely wages of wan large iron dollar a day of tin hours. Along comes another freebarn son-of-a-gun an’ he sez t’ th’ boss: ‘I think I could handle th’ job for ninety cints.’ ‘Sure,’ sez th’ boss, an’ the wan-dollar man gets the merry jinglin’ can, an’ goes out into th’ crool world t’ exercise his inalienable roights as a freebarn Amerycan citizen and scab on some other poor divil. An’ so it goes on, Hinnissey. An’ who gets th’ benefit? Thru, it saves th’ boss money, but he don’t care no more for money than he does for his roight eye. It’s all principle wid him. He hates t’ see min robbed of their indipendence. They must have their indipendence, regahrdliss of inything ilse.”

“But,” said Hennessey, “these open shop min ye minshun say they are fer th’ unions, if properly conducted.”

“Shure,” said Mr. Dooley, “if properly conducted. An’ there ye are. An’ how wud they have thim conducted? No shtrikes, no scales, hardly iny wages, an’ damn few mimbers.”

History Repeats Itself

JOHN P. FREY.

EVEN in the matter of disputes over the question of the union or non-union shop, history repeats itself. In the records of the city of Exeter, England, there is found reference to a bitter struggle by the Taylor’s Gild during the years 1475-6-7, in its effort to bring about a thorough organization and force all tailors to pay dues to the gild, on the one hand, and the non-union, or non-gild tailors, supported apparently by the city authorities, on the other. We are informed in the most unique language that the members of the gild attacked the non-members and destroyed their shops in “modo querrino arriate, ve et armis, videlicet jactis, doblettis of defense, swerdis, boke-lers, glayves, and staves, in domo,” and that at other times they were armed with “arsubus, glayvis, baculis, et daggariis.” In fact, the belligerent tailors seem to have used every weapon except scissors and pressing irons upon their opponents.

The record would make it appear that the non-gild tailors were good citizens and independent workmen and a credit to the city, while the union or gild tailors were a bad and desperate lot; but the story is told by the city authorities who were fighting the gild and endeavoring to put it out of business.

They did succeed in “putting it out of business,” just as has been done to modern trade unions, only to discover that the motives and principles which prompt workmen to organize are more powerful than the mere edict of a court that they shall disband.

The gild-hating city fathers prepared a strong case, and armed with affidavits, presented it before the king at London. The king, Edward IV, sided with the Exeter authorities and issued a decree disbanding the Taylor’s Gild. Two of the king’s commissioners, John Fortesque and John Courtney, went to Exeter and officially decreed that the gild was no more. Afterwards, as we are told, jubilantly drinking wine with the mayor, John Denys, in the house of Matthew Tubbe, at the expense of the town, to the amount of viii d.

This celebration, however, was premature, for the union tailors refused to surrender their organization, and at last the city fathers compromised their attitude, and the gild not only held its own, but remained in existence some 400 years; in fact, long after it had lost its original character and had become an employers’ organization in the modern sense of the term.

The experience of the Exeter tailors in the fifteenth century was similar to that of some other gilds, and our trade unions have had to contend with similar antagonism of the authorities, on many occasions, having been declared illegal organizations, yet the final story has been the same, the wage earners’ organizations have not only remained in existence, but have become stronger.

THE UNITED RAILWAYS

THE UNITED RAILWAYS has decreed that the jitney bus must get off Market street. Accordingly it was ruled off by special city ordinance. Of course there’s plenty of room on the main thoroughfare of San Francisco for limousines with bejeweled and beapainted political ladies, but none for a jitney carrying half a dozen workers to their places of employment. How dare they rob the U. R. of their nickels!

The *Bulletin*, which masquerades as a “liberal” paper, has sided with the corporations against the poor man’s auto. It has followed the same profitable and easy line in the bosses’ conspiracy against the men indicted in the bomb case. Fremont Older, the professed radical, has shut up like an oyster. He dare not say a word in behalf of decency and fairness. How well the poet expressed it: “The coward dies a thousand deaths.”

DEFENSE FUND SAN FRANCISCO LABOR PRISONERS

Collected by Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman

Collected at E. G. San Francisco lectures:

J. Lizzul	\$ 10.00
Miss Buckbee	5.00
A. Feinberg	2.00
T. Mishkin	1.00
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Pierson	2.00
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Collected by A. Berkman at Oakland Picnic ..	17.20
A friend	25.00
Dr. Rose Fritz	5.00
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G. Barazzone and friends, West Frankfort, Ill.	1.50
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A. Bers, San Francisco	2.00
Joseph D’Angelo, Wilmington, Del.	1.00
M. E. Fitzgerald	5.00
Loan from friend, per A. B.	1000.00
M. K. Serailian, S. F.	5.00
A friend	2.50
A friend	2.00
Emma Goldman, in Seattle and Portland ..	18.65

\$1360.65

Turned over to the defense by Alexander Berkman:

Per E. B. M.	\$ 100.00
Per Robert Minor, Treasurer	200.00
Per Robert Minor, Treasurer	1000.00
To prisoners per R. M.	25.00
To Ada Nolan	11.00
Per Robert Minor, Treasurer	24.65

\$1360.65

September 15, 1916.

ALEXANDER BERKMAN.

An Italian Restaurant

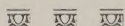
W. L. George

THEY sat at a marble-topped table, flooded with light by incandescent gas. In the glare the waiters seemed blacker, smaller and more stunted than by the light of day. Their faces were pallid, with a touch of green: their hair and moustaches were almost blue black. Their energy was that of automata. Victoria looked at them, melting with pity.

"There's life for you," said Farwell, interpreting her look. "Sixteen hours' work a day in an atmosphere of stale food. For meals, plate scourings. For sleep and time to get to it, eight hours. For living, the rest of the day."

"It's awful, awful," said Victoria. "They might as well be dead."

"They will be soon," said Farwell, "but what does that matter? There are plenty of waiters. In the shadow of the olive groves tonight in far-off Calabria, at the base of the vine-clad hills, couples are walking hand in hand, with passion flashing in their eyes. Brown peasant boys are clasping to their breasts young girls with dark hair, white teeth, red lips, hearts that beat and quiver with ecstasy. They tell a tale of love and hope. So we shall not be short of waiters."



SPACE in THE BLAST is too limited to publish even a small part of the many letters of appreciation and encouragement we receive from our readers. By request of our comrades in Cleveland, Ohio, we reproduce the following

Resolution

WE, the Anarchist Group of Cleveland, Ohio, want to express to you our admiration for your brave fight against injustice and oppression, and your stand in behalf of the arrested labor men, and we want to assure you of our moral and financial support in your struggle against the outrageous despotism of official and unofficial Vigilante scoundrels.

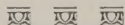
We are with you, now and ever, and we will fight with you.

Hoping that other labor and radical organizations will take similar action, we remain with revolutionary greetings.

THE ANARCHIST GROUP OF CLEVELAND
Per Jack Myers, Secretary.

P. S.—We enclose M. O. for \$13.75, of which sum \$4.35 was contributed by the Union of Russian Workers, and the balance collected at the gathering of our Group.

J. M.

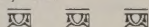


THE CYCLOPS OF CULTURE. Whoever has seen those furrowed basins, which once contained glaciers, will hardly deem it possible that a time will come when the same spot will be a valley of woods and meadows and streams. It is the same in the history of mankind; the wildest forces break the way, destructively at first, but their activity was nevertheless necessary in order that later on a milder civilization might build up its house. These terrible energies—that which is called Evil—are the cyclopean architects and roadmakers of humanity.

—Nietzsche

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

OSCAR WILDE: HIS LIFE AND CONFESSIONS, by Frank Harris. Published in 2 vols., by the author, 3 Washington Square, New York.
THE NEXT STEP IN DEMOCRACY, by R. W. Sellars, Ph. D. Macmillan Co., New York; \$1.50.
JUSTICE IN WAR TIME, by Bertrand Russell. The Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago; \$1.00.
THE CRY FOR JUSTICE: An Anthology of the Literature of Social Protest. Edited by Upton Sinclair. Introduction by Jack London. The John C. Winston Co., Philadelphia; \$2.00.
MURDER, by David Greenberg. \$1.50.
NEUTRALITY, by S. Ivor Stephen. Neutrality Press, Chicago; 50 cents.
ECONOMICS OF LIBERTY, by John Beverley Robinson.
A CHRISTMAS CANTATA, by Charles Erskine Scott Wood, Portland, Ore.
THE POET IN THE DESERT, by Charles Erskine Scott Wood, Portland, Ore.
THE PEST AND OTHER ONE-ACT PLAYS, by Emanuel Julius. Box 125, Girard, Kansas.
SHAMBLES, by Henry T. Schmittkind, Ph. D. Ferrer Colony, Stetson, N. J.
THE BROOK KERITH, a Syrian Story by George Moore. Macmillan, New York; \$1.50.
THE JEW TO JESUS, AND OTHER POEMS, by Florence Kiper Frank. Mitchell Kennerly, New York; \$1.00.
SOCIALISM IN AMERICA, by John Macy. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York; \$1.00.
THE TRADE UNION WOMAN, by Alice Henry. D. Appleton & Co., New York. \$1.50.
MARTYRS OR CRIMINALS? by Theodore Schroeder, Cos Cob, Conn.
LIBERTY THROUGH IMPERSONAL SERVICE, by Theodore Schroeder.
WHAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS DONE TO MEXICO, by Dr. A. Paredes, Mexico. D. F.
A FEW FACTS ABOUT BRITISH RULE IN INDIA. The Hindustan Gadar, San Francisco, Cal.
INDIA'S "LOYALTY" TO ENGLAND. The Indian National Party.
THE METHODS OF THE INDIAN POLICE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. The Hindustan Gadar, San Francisco, Cal.



The Open Forum meets every Thursday, 8:00 p. m., at Averill Hall, 1265 Market street.
"Bob" Minor, the rebel cartoonist, speaks Thursday, September 21, 8:00 p. m., at La Boheme Hall, 1530 Ellis street.
S. F. Russian Dramatic Society, Saturday evening, September 30th, Benefit Performance and Ball, for International Workers' Defense League of S. F., at German House, corner Turk and Polk. "The Days of Our Life," or "Student's Love"; play in four acts by Leonid Andreyev. Dancing all night. Tickets, 25 cents.

A War Fund for the Blast

THE BLAST is a sharp thorn in the flesh of the Law and Order reactionists. Their avowed purpose is to strangle every voice raised in protest against official outrage and injustice.

With the Chamber of Commerce in complete control of the local press, none daring to utter a free and fearless word, THE BLAST must live and keep up the fight. It is the only voice on the Coast raised in behalf of our imprisoned comrades whom the masters have picked as victims of their revenge on Labor.

The enemy is prepared to kill THE BLAST. We are determined to continue its revolutionary propaganda. Nay, more: THE BLAST will bend every effort and marshal its increasing influence to defeat the conspiracy to hang our imprisoned friends. The enemy shall not gloat over new scaffolds erected for the most intelligent and devoted rebels of California Labor.

THE BLAST must have a war fund of \$1,000. Respond quickly.
ALEXANDER BERKMAN

OUR BOOK SHOP

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SONGS OF LOVE AND REBELLION, by Covington Hall	.50	
THE LITTLE REVIEW, Margaret Anderson, Editor (Chicago). A bold literary iconoclast	15c a copy	
EVERYMAN, monthly by Luke North (Los Angeles)	10c a copy	

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